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ABSTRACT

Using a discourse-centered approach to ethnography, this book provides an empirically based, contemporary overview of a rapidly changing First Nations village in northern Ontario (Canada). Data were collected in the 1980s during a 2-year residence and follow-up visits in the Severn Ojibwa community of Lynx Lake, a remote subarctic village in which the Native language, Ojibwa, is completely viable and used by every member of the Native community. Analyses illustrate the ways in which a society is indexed through its discourse, and how changes in society affect language use. The portrayal of Lynx Lake and its unique brand of self-determination demonstrates that cultural change and the adoption of modern technology in Native communities need not result in the loss of Native identity or language. Chapters cover diverse topics, including: (1) characteristics of the Severn Ojibwa language variety and of the Lynx Lake community; (2) changes in communication networks induced by technological imports into Lynx Lake; (3) usage of Severn Ojibwa, Cree, and English in various social contexts, and different types of code switching; (4) English literacy, the very high literacy rate in Ojibwa using Cree syllabics, and community means of learning and teaching syllabics; (5) the intersection of music, language, and literacy; (6) church discourse and the role of the Anglican church in community life and identity; (7) first-person narratives and storytelling; (8) genres of legend and myth; and (9) the use of discourse as a tool in sociocultural analysis. Appendices include a typological overview of Severn Ojibwa and Ojibwa speech terms. (Contains 152 references, chapter notes, and an index.) (SV)